

Comptes-Rendus de Lecture

Malcom Bower and Lucette Barbarin

French for Business

(fourth edition) Hodder & Stoughton

student's book £10.99

support book and cassette set pack £20 + VAT

reviewed by Kate Beeching, UWE

The fourth edition of *French for Business* retains the familiar 13 chapter headings and the original presentation dialogues. A new table of contents details the grammar points covered and the topics and functions. The revised Introduction indicates how the course fits the requirements of new public examinations and highlights the new elements of the Fourth Edition. New, more varied, exercises have been included and the grammar practice activities have been updated to reflect communicative approaches. A pragmatic approach to the use of the target language has been adopted. The introductory rubrics to the dialogues and role-plays are now in French but the grammar explanations remain in English. The greatest, and very welcome, change is in the newly-styled Reading and Reacting sections, now called Listening, Reading and Reacting. The new listening sections offer a variety of registers with interviews and radio news flashes. More intrinsically interesting new reading texts could perhaps have been selected and their presentation on the page could perhaps have been more enticing but the new *Faisons le point sur...* texts, specially written in French to give background information, provide ample compensation for this. The final *Activité de recherche* section in each chapter leads students to relate their classroom French to the outside world in a task-based approach.

The fourth edition of *French for Business* retains the sound and sensible elements which rightly made its predecessors popular. The disadvantage of introducing new material (272 pages, as opposed to 192) is that the chapters are not so easy to “get through”—one of the beauties of the original pared-down format. The retention of the focus on the manufacturing base of industry and business, of Mr Sanderson's somewhat formal approach to business and social dealings and the inclusion of such grammar points as the imperfect subjunctive (at post-GCSE level) may make a more radical shift in thinking necessary in the not-too-distant future. Meanwhile, a very creditable holding operation has been achieved.

Comptes-Rendus de Lecture

G.D.A. Sharpley

***Sorry I didn't quite catch that... ...répétez s'il
vous plaît***

French for business and pleasure

Multilingua, 1996

80 pages ; ISBN 0 9528071 0 6 £4.95

accompanied by one cassette (98 min) ISBN 0 952807157
£10.00

reviewed by Claire Laudet, Trinity College Dublin.

This slim volume and the accompanying cassette offer yet another course in listening comprehension targeted at the intermediate level student of Business French. It is traditional both in the range of topics (Using the phone to confirm an appointment, travel arrangements, meeting your French colleague, at the restaurant, etc...) and in its approach: each of the 10 chapters comprises dialogues for listening practice, accompanied by two or three questions to check comprehension, "Role-play" conversations (a voice gives the answer in English and the student is encouraged to produce a French version before a correct version is given on the tape), a few very short documents for reading practice and finally pronunciation drills based on the key phrases used in the dialogues followed by a few suggestions for individual practice. Brief and fairly sketchy comments and guidelines on French manners and business practices are given before the dialogues. There is neither a glossary or an explanation/introduction of the various linguistic structures used in the dialogues nor an index. It is therefore not the ideal package for students working on their own. In addition, to be able to use the cassette effectively, the learner needs to use the pause button constantly, in particular for the role-plays and the pronunciation exercises. I also spotted a few errors and inaccuracies. In my view, it is a rather disappointing offering on a market already fairly well supplied with similar materials.

B. J. Adab

Annotated Texts for Translation, English to French

Multilingual Matters, 1996

344pp: Hardback £39, Paperback £14.95

reviewed by P.M.Sewell, Birkbeck College

This volume is a sequel to one published in 1993 (French to English). It is aimed at under- and post-graduates, and the autodidact.

The volume has the following components: Acknowledgements; Chapter 1 “A Theoretical and Conceptual Framework” (30pp) This densely-written section, together with its bibliography, provides a very useful overview of major theoretical debates surrounding the practice of translation. Chapter 2 “Preface to Texts” (10pp) describes possible ways of using the book. 10 texts of 1000 words; 19 texts of 500 words + 1 practice text (70pp); targets texts (75pp); annotations (145pp)

The texts are described as informative or discursive.

The book aims to promote the “ability to generalise the processes and patterns observed and look for them in other texts, contexts and situations”. (p.3)... “The starting point of this approach is the *translation oriented text analysis* of Christiane Nord (1991)” (p. 29). The method is eclectic, using text-linguistics and addressing cultural specificity.

The paperback edition is far from user-friendly. The type-face is too small; there is a huge amount of densely-packed information to be assimilated; the margins are too narrow; the presentation of all STs, followed by all TTs, followed by all annotations means much fumbling and sticking of fingers in various parts of the book in order to follow ST, TT and annotation; you have to turn to the second page of each text in order to ascertain its number; and finally, the invaluable introduction to each text is printed with the annotations, whereas it is needed before (or after) each ST to help you as you translate.

Regrettably, the book is littered with misprints, starting on page 1, and no fewer than three on page 181 alone. “He”, rather than “s/he” is used to designate “the translator”. There is a mention of Vinay and D'Arbelnet's (*sic*) 1977 book *Stylistique comparée...*, but I believe the date was 1958.

As I read the TTS I started to make a list of phrases that struck me as un-French, or in some cases, incomprehensible. The list is long. There are also many cases of dubious translation, eg:

Already companies routinely contracted out personnel department and information technology functions and were increasingly employing general managers on a project by project basis only, he said in his keynote address.

p. 87

Il a annoncé, dans la note dominante de son discours, qu'il était déjà courant pour les sociétés de sous-traiter leur service du personnel et leur service informatique, et d'employer des responsables sur la base de leurs projets seulement.

p. 165

Small, but important, points concern the non-conversion of pounds sterling (text 30), and the use of "our" (text 17: does it refer to the English or the French?).

On the plus side, this is a grand idea, very helpful for the would-be translator. Second, this is a painstaking study. Third, comparative studies like this, do help to raise awareness of the complexities of the translation process. I welcome the emphasis on ST analysis, as like the author, I view it as the basis for good translation.

If I were to use this book, I might ask students to attempt to draw conclusions from it. For none is drawn. The book remains descriptive, non-evaluative. It would have benefited from having half the number of texts, with more careful discussion of the TTS (their very shortcomings are instructive). The book is nonetheless a useful resource for the translation teacher.